

Amendments to the Claims:

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1 - 68. (canceled)

69. (previously presented) A filtering face mask that comprises:

- (a) a mask body that is adapted to fit over the nose and mouth of a wearer; and
- (b) an exhalation valve that is attached to the mask body, the exhalation valve

comprising:

- (1) a valve seat that comprises:
 - (i) a seal surface; and
 - (ii) an orifice that is circumscribed by the seal surface;

(2) a single flexible flap that has a fixed portion and a free portion and first and second opposing ends, the first end of the single flexible flap being associated with the fixed portion of the flap so as to remain at rest during an exhalation, and the second end being associated with the free portion of the flexible flap so as to be lifted away from the seal surface during an exhalation, the second end also being located below the first end when the filtering face mask is worn on a person, the flexible flap being positioned on the valve seat such that the flap is pressed towards the seal surface in an abutting relationship therewith, under any orientation of the valve, when no external forces from the movement of fluid are exerted upon the flap; and

- (3) a valve cover that is disposed over the valve seat and that comprises:
 - (i) an opening that is disposed directly in the path of fluid flow when the free portion of the flexible flap is lifted from the seal surface during an exhalation; and
 - (ii) a fluid impervious ceiling that has an interior that has a means for preventing the free end of the flexible flap from adhering to the fluid-permeable ceiling when moisture is present on the ceiling or on the flexible flap.

70. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 69, wherein the means for prevent the free end of the flexible flap from adhering to the ceiling includes a ribbed or coarse pattern or release surface.

71. (previously presented) A filtering face mask that comprises:

- (a) a mask body;
- (b) an exhalation valve that is attached to the mask body, the exhalation valve comprising an orifice, a valve seat that has a seal surface, and a flexible flap that has a stationary portion and a free portion, the stationary portion of the flexible flap remaining essentially stationary when a fluid is passing through the orifice during an exhalation while the free portion being lifted from the seal surface in response to a force from the fluid; and
- (c) a valve cover that is attached to the valve seat, the valve cover comprising a means for preventing the free portion of the flexible flap from adhering to the valve cover when the flexible flap is lifted from the seal surface during the exhalation and when moisture is present on the valve cover and/or flexible flap.

72. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 71, wherein the means for preventing adhering comprises a rib that is located on an interior of a ceiling of the valve cover.

73. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 71, wherein the means for preventing adhering comprises a coarse pattern that is located on an interior of a ceiling of the valve cover.

74. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 71, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat at the stationary portion of the flexible flap.

75. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 74, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat in cantilevered fashion.

76. (previously presented) A filtering face mask that comprises:

(a) a mask body;

(b) an exhalation valve that is attached to the mask body, the exhalation valve comprising an orifice, a valve seat that has a seal surface, and a flexible flap that has a stationary portion and a free portion, the stationary portion of the flexible flap remaining essentially stationary when a fluid is passing through the orifice during an exhalation while the free portion being lifted from the seal surface in response to a force from the fluid; and

(c) a valve cover that is attached to the valve seat, the valve cover comprising a ceiling that has an interior surface, the interior surface having a ribbed or coarse pattern or release surface to prevent the free portion of the flexible flap from sticking to the ceiling when the free portion of the flexible flap is lifted away from the seal surface.

77. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 76, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat at the stationary portion of the flexible flap.

78. (previously presented) The filtering face mask of claim 76, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat in cantilevered fashion.

79 - 93. (canceled)

94. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 71, wherein:

the exhalation valve has only one flexible flap that has only one free portion, and the only one flexible flap has a peripheral edge that includes a stationary segment and a free segment, the stationary segment being associated with the stationary portion and the free segment being associated with the free portion, the free portion being located below the stationary portion when the mask is viewed from the front in an upright position, and wherein

the flexible flap is positioned on the valve seat such that the flap exhibits a curvature when viewed from the side in cross-section.

95. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 94, wherein the valve seat seal surface exhibits a curvature when viewed from the side in cross-section.

96. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 71, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat off-center relative to the orifice when viewing the mask from the front in an upright position.

97. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 76, wherein:
the exhalation valve has only one flexible flap that has only one free portion, and the only one flexible flap has a peripheral edge that includes a stationary segment and a free segment, the stationary segment being associated with the stationary portion and the free segment being associated with the free portion, the free portion being located below the stationary portion when the mask is viewed from the front in an upright position, and wherein

the flexible flap is positioned on the valve seat such that the flap exhibits a curvature when viewed from the side in cross-section.

98. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 97, wherein the valve seat seal surface exhibits a curvature when viewed from the side in cross-section.

99. (new) The filtering face mask of claim 76, wherein the flexible flap is secured to the valve seat off-center relative to the orifice when viewing the mask from the front in an upright position.